

## COST OF NURSING HOME CARE

The cost of nursing home care and how it will be paid for must be considered. Payments for care can come from a variety of sources, including:

- Private resources such as stocks, bonds, savings accounts, pensions or Social Security benefits;
- Veterans care benefits;
- Health care and long term care insurance plans;
- Medicare (a federal insurance program for the elderly and disabled); and
- Medicaid, also known as Medical Assistance (a federal/state program that helps pay for health care for low-income and other eligible persons).



It is important to learn about the benefits available from private insurance and/or governmental programs. If Medicare or Medicaid will be used to pay for care, you will want to select a home that is certified to receive payments from these programs.

Here are some broad guidelines:



- Medicare pays for care for a limited period of time, if certain medical requirements are met (e.g., skilled nursing care or rehabilitation).
  - Medicaid pays for care for an unlimited time, so long as the person remains eligible. Eligibility is based on the level of care needed by the person and his/her financial condition.
- Medicare and Medicaid may also pay for other services (such as therapy, medications, physician visits, etc.) that are needed in the nursing home if the

resident qualifies. However, not all services are paid for by Medicare and Medicaid.

If the potential resident has low income, a spouse who will remain in the community, or income that will not cover the cost of care, it is important to check for Medicaid eligibility before looking for a nursing home. Nursing homes will want to know how you intend to pay for care.

Generally, the department of social or human services in the county where the nursing home is located determines who is financially eligible for Medicaid. When discussing possible eligibility with the county department of social or human services, be sure to get information about:

- Wisconsin's divestment law, which describes the assets you are prohibited from giving away;
- What amount, if any, the person may allocate of his/her income and assets to a spouse and dependents living in the community (refer to Wisconsin's Spousal Impoverishment Law);
- The Medicaid Program's estate recovery rules;
- The amount of money a person may keep for personal use once he/she lives in a nursing home;
- How long it takes for a decision to be made about Medicaid eligibility; and
- How to file an appeal if eligibility is denied.